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Scenarios and strategies for Social Media in Engaging and Giving Voice to Employees

Emma Parry, Graeme Martin and Joe Dromey

Introduction

Social media have become ubiquitous in the non-work lives of many people who frequently use these media to express their thoughts and ideas, share matters of common interest with friends and colleagues and collaborate for socially useful ends. However, evidence suggests that organizations are much less likely to use social media for these purposes, despite the positive claims made by many advocates for these media in employee relations (Dromey, 2016). This evidence gives rise to two questions that require further research. The first is: why have some organizations and some employees been less enthusiastic about the typically positive case for using social media to help them collaborate, share their knowledge and give voice to their views about issues over which they are most concerned in their organizations? Second, and following on from this first question, what options are best for organizations seeking to engage employees in using social media for employee collaboration, knowledge sharing and voice through social media? In this chapter, we attempt to answer both questions by identifying two dimensions of technology – technological engagement and organizational control – to offer a framework suggesting possible answers to these questions. Based on our framework, we analyse data from six cases, which we use to shed further light on these questions. Our analysis focuses on how power is used in organizations to control social media, generate positive and negative patterns of trust dynamics and encourage employee voice and collaboration.

Social Media, Employee Engagement and Voice: A Framework for Analysis



Potentially powerful social media are increasingly widely used by the HR function (Martin, Parry & Flowers, 2015; Parry & Solidaro, 2013) to enable incremental and transformational change in organizations. Such change focuses on: (a) encouraging collaboration and engagement among key stakeholders, (b) sharing knowledge and facilitating organizational learning, (c) helping organizations communicate with social-media 'savvy' employees, (d) helping organizations, employees and potential employees learn more about each other, and (e) giving employees and other key stakeholders, such as customers, more powerful 'voice' over key features of their working lives. As can be seen from this list, employee voice and how is it exercised have become central concerns of organizations: but what exactly do we mean by employee voice?

Most research on the topic begins with reference to Hirschman's (1970) perspective of voice as a human tendency to express discontent by 'kicking up a fuss' (p. 30), which he saw as a positive alternative to exiting organizations. More recently, Budd (2014: 477) has defined employee voice as expressing opinions and having meaningful input into work-related decision-making', which includes 'individual and collective voice, union and non-union voice, and voice mechanisms that cover employment terms, work autonomy and wider strategic and business issues. In previous work (Martin, Parry & Flowers, 2015) we have defined the exercise of voice as: (a) whether employees choose to 'speak up' or remain silent, (b) whether they use their voice in a pro-social manner to share knowledge with each other and with managers, and collaborate to improve decision-making, or use it as a form of revenge, and (c) the extent to which employees enjoy the freedom to exercise voice

as a democratic input into decision-making control their work situations (Wilkinson and Fay, 2011).

One way of framing the relationship between social media and employee voice, and answering the two research questions we posed in the opening paragraph, is to draw on the concepts of technological engagement and organizational control (Martin, Reddington, Kneafsey & Sloman, 2009; Martin & Siebert, 2016). We define these concepts in the following paragraphs.

Technological Engagement. Since all technologies have to be designed and implemented by people, technologies such as social media can be more or less engaging because they mediate between people and the objects of their engagement. This idea draws on socio-technical systems thinking, in which organizational design is based on the interaction between people, work organization and technical systems for its effectiveness. By technology, we mean hardware, software and the knowledge and social forms of work organization which typically accompany any given form of technology (Martin & Siebert, 2016). So, we define technological engagement to express the extent of employees' attachment to particular forms of technology. This attachment has three components:

- employees' social identification (Brown, 2015) with a particular form of technology (to what extent does it help them express their personal identity – who am I and who am I not?), 
- employees' internalisation of a given technology's built in values (does the technology embody values that employees hold?); and 

- employees' psychological ownership of a technology (to what extent do they believe the technology is their own and no-one else's?).^[15]

It might help to think in terms of a music genre analogy. Jazz and Skiffle in the 1950s, rock music, soul and punk in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by new romantic, hip-hop, rap and house music can all be seen as socio-technical systems that helped different generations express their identities of who they were (and who they definitely were not, e.g. their class), their values (guitar bands versus electronically generated music) and their sense of psychological ownership over a technology of music (e.g. jazz and improvisation).

Thus, we can think of technological engagement in terms of a continua answering the question: how easy is it for employees to identify and engage with a particular technology to collaborate, share knowledge and express their voice in their organizations? At one end of the scale, technologies can be highly engaging for certain groups of employees and facilitate their voice and collaboration; on the end of the scale, some technologies can disengage employees and inhibit voice and collaboration.

Organizational Control. A second way of thinking about technology is the extent to which it facilitates organizational control – one of the core issues in the academic and practitioner literature on organizational analysis. Organizations are sometimes defined as control mechanisms, designed to ensure predictability by aligning stakeholders such as employees with their vision and values and to ensure they comply with these. Control, however, can be seen in a positive and negative light since it is manifested in the use and abuse of power in organizations, and how these generate low and high trust dynamics between managers and employees (Siebert,

Martin, Bozic & Docherty, 2016). Trust dynamics refer to the extent to which employees and managers regard each other as trustworthy, in terms of their competence (skills and ability), benevolence (wishing to do well by the other) and integrity (adhering to principles that the other regards as important or acceptable) (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman,1995/2007). Power can be articulated in distinctions made by sociologists and philosophers such as Stephen Lukes (20) and Paul Ricoeur (1992). The first distinction is to think of power in the sense of '*power-over*', which, according to Lukes, manifests itself in (a) the power to win, (b) the power to set the agenda, and (c) ideological power, often covertly, to influence or manipulate people's wishes and interests. This use of power over is widespread in organizations and is usually likened to a zero-sum game – the more power-over the organization has to determine what is done and 'how things are done around here', the less power stakeholders, for example employees, enjoy to further their interests or ways of working. Often, as Fox (1974) argued in his classic work on power and trust relations, power exercised as power-over generates a low trust response among employees because they see it as a low trust initiative.

A second distinction is to see power in terms of '*power-to-do*' (Ricoeur, 1992), which is a positive-sum game, whereby two or more people or groups can share their power to collaborate to achieve something collectively they cannot achieve individually. This use of power underlies the pluralist theory of integrative bargaining and partnership agreements in HRM and the Wisdom of Crowds thesis, which refers to the power of crowds to generate better ideas and innovation than individuals. Collaboration often means that managers and employees agree to follow the classic dictum that to (re)gain control, you have to share control, which is a concept at the

heart of the debate over authentic voice. According to researchers such as Fox (1974), this use of power-to-do is associated with generating high trust dynamics in organizations, with high trust initiatives by managers much more likely to be met by high trust employee responses.

A third distinction has its origins in Ricouer's notion of '*power in common*', which he saw as a property of collectives working together to ensure 'we live well as a community'. While this third use of power is sometimes seen as somewhat idealistic, we can perhaps think about it as embracing a system whereby managers and employees come together to articulate an organization's aims as being equally concerned with ethics and morality as with economic outcomes, and with ensuring well-being at work for all. We shall return to this aspect of control and power in our conclusions.

Thus organizational control can be thought of as the extent to which technologies are put into the hands of employees for expressing authentic voice and collaborating over the means and ends of their working lives in organizations. At one end of this continuum, employees enjoy maximum autonomy and high trust from managers; at the other end, employees enjoy minimum autonomy and experience low trust from managers in how they use technologies.

We can relate these two variables in the form of a two-by-two matrix to set out four scenarios of employees likely use of Enterprise-based social media to express authentic voice and collaborate with one another for the purposes of learning and sharing knowledge (see Figure 1). By Enterprise social media, we mean social media introduced by the organization for specific purposes, set behind its firewalls

and controlled by it (as distinct from open social media such as Facebook, Twitter and other blogging sites). Both engagement and control can be expressed as two ends of intersecting continua. These categories of responses give rise to differences in employees' use of social media according to whether they see these media as:

- (1) a means of improving two way communications and information sharing, and/or
- (2) a means of improving decision-making

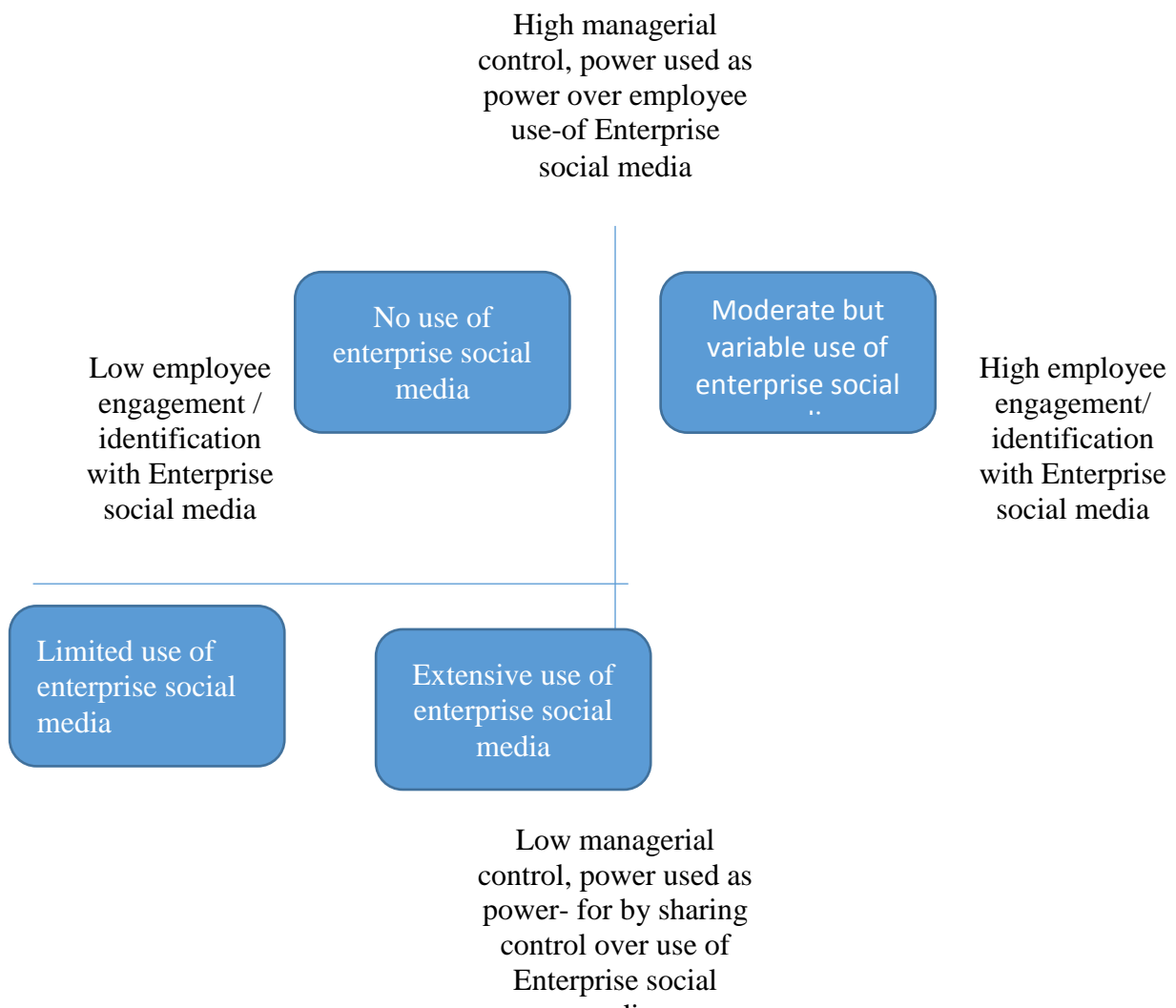


Figure 1:

These four archetypal scenarios give rise to different propositions regarding employees use of enterprise social media to improve communications and collaborative decision-making.

1. **Reject Enterprise Social Media.** In the top left hand scenario, we propose that employees whose engagement and identification with particular forms of Enterprise-based social media is low and who experience it as introduced and

controlled by the organization in a power-over relationship are likely to make little or no use of these media to improve two-way communications or collaborative decision-making.

2. **Moderate but variable Use of Enterprise Social Media.** In the top right hand scenario, we propose that certain groups of employees, who engage and identify with certain types of Enterprise social media and who see these media in a power-for relationship, are likely to make extensive use of these media to improve communications and decision-making. Other groups of employees in the organization, however, will either reject these media, or use them in a calculative manner or even asocial manner for two way communications and collaborative decision-making.
3. **Limited use of Enterprise Social Media.** In the bottom left hand scenario we propose that there will be limited/ sporadic use of Enterprise social media because they have low engagement/ identification with the Enterprise's social media, even although they perceive it as having been introduced for employees' benefit and with extensive consultation. These employees are likely to make minimal use of enterprise social media to improve communications and collaborative decision-making
4. **Extensive use of Enterprise Social Media.** In the bottom right hand box, enterprise social media has been designed and introduced in a power-for manner (extensive consultation and input) by organizations to ensure that it allows them to express their identity, embodies the values they hold and gives them a sense of ownership and control over these media. Thus we propose that employees will make extensive use of enterprise social media to improve communications and collaborative decision making. because

To provide a qualitative assessment of certain of these archetypes and to provide a partial test of the four propositions arising from them, we undertook research into six case studies of UK companies which had introduced Enterprise social media. These are described and analysed below.

Methods and Data Collection

Our short case summaries are based upon data from a project undertaken by the Industrial Participation Association (IPA) on behalf of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). The case studies are of x UK-based organisations in diverse sectors, including public, private and not-for-profit: Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust; Lloyds Register; London Borough of Lewisham; Nampak; Oxfam GB and Southeastern Trains. Data were collected using individual semi-structured interviews with senior managers and HR practitioners within the organisations and analysed for key themes. A standard interview guide was developed for this purpose. In addition, relevant company information was analysed and focus groups and interviews were run with employees

Findings

Our cases point to enterprise social media being used to various degrees to promote employee voice as we proposed in our framework, namely : (1) as a means of improving two-way communications and information sharing, and (2) as a means of improving decision-making through enhanced collaboration between individuals and teams.

Social media used to improve two-way communications and information sharing

First, social media was used to encourage two-way communication and information sharing, particularly when the workforce was geographically dispersed or mobile.

The cases of Nampak, Southeastern and Oxfam GB provide good examples of these uses of social media for employee voice.

Nampak

Nampak is a leading UK manufacturer of milk bottles, with 550 employees across nine sites. The company has a strong emphasis on employee engagement and employee voice and therefore saw it as important for employee communication tools to provide a voice for employees to share ideas and harness innovation. The organisation had a number of existing voice initiatives including an annual conference and excellence awards evening, regular team briefings and an employee survey. The company also recognise a trade union at some of its sites. The company introduced online tool “Yammer” as a tool that was readily available, engaging for employees, and easy to navigate and use. They encourage employees to submit ideas for process improvements and, if adopted, they receive five per cent of the savings.

After three-months take up of Yammer was relatively slow, with only 145 employees signed up. Adoption by managers and office-based employees was relatively high but it was problematic to engage machine operatives on shift work, partly because these people do not have a Nampak email address and the process of registering a personal email address is somewhat drawn out. In addition, it was recognised that

some employees were not familiar with social media and there was a lack of trust in the technology. Consequently the company has undertaken marketing in order to increase adoption of Yammer, via their business conference, the company magazine and appointing “champions” at each site. Nampak has also released some simple guidelines for using social media in order to reduce the chance of misuse.

The reactions of users to the tool has been generally positive with employees feeling valued and more up-to-date with company activities. Social media is seen by many employees and managers as a means for providing consistent messages and information across a geographically dispersed workforce and for bringing the sites closer together. It is also seen as increasing the visibility of senior leadership and breaking down barriers between senior leadership and employees. Yammer is also seen as important in facilitating innovation via an online innovation group where people are encouraged to put forward and discuss ideas. However, there was also a view expressed by some employees that the early use of the tool has been “*relatively corporate*”, focusing on business issues only. To counter this perspective, senior management have been keen for employees to share more personal and informal posts to build “*a bit of community spirit and ...a sense of belonging from being at Nampak*”.

Southeastern

Southeastern is a UK train operator which employs around 4,000 people. The company wanted to introduce social media to address a perceived deficiency in employee voice and to provide a mechanism to obtain employees’ views on a range of issues from its highly dispersed workforce. Previously, the company used a staff

survey and an intranet but management were unhappy with the effectiveness of these in promoting employee voice. Thus, they adopted “WorkMate” (a version of “Socialtext”), an enterprise social network in April 2012. WorkMate is similar to Facebook in that users have a personal profile and can look at activity streams, join groups and send private messages. The platform contained a news blog, the “Worth a Look” section, for key issues and a library of key information and policies. The company made sure that WorkMate was integrated into other Voice channels, including promoting and reporting on a weekly phone-in with senior management and the staff survey. The trade unions also have their own pages on WorkMate. The company have developed a standard code of conduct for use of WorkMate but generally have a self-regulating approach.

WorkMate has been relatively successful with 80 per cent of employees registered and 2,200 visiting per month. However, the most common use was for passive access to information with only around 500 employees actively posting views and ideas on it per month. The company see WorkMate as allowing them to communicate real-time information and to engage with a highly dispersed and mobile workforce, as well as to share expertise and information across the workforce. Employees can post questions or requests on WorkMate and receive responses from colleagues in other parts of the organisation. In addition, WorkMate is used to obtain employee views and opinions on specific topics (e.g. a change in uniform policy). Southeastern encourage non-work discussions (around a third of topics are unrelated to work) in order to build a sense of community within the organisation.

A significant challenge to using WorkMate has been senior management engagement with limited involvement of senior managers over the first few years. Interviewees saw this as the result of a “*what can it do for me?*” perception among senior managers. This calculative approach by senior managers to WorkMate is reflected by some middle managers, whose use follows a similar pattern.

Oxfam GB

Oxfam GB is one of 17 affiliate organisations that make up Oxfam, an international non-governmental organisation working to reduce poverty and injustice across the world. Oxfam employs 5,000 employees worldwide. Oxfam has used Yammer for several years, alongside an intranet called “Karl” which both provides information and allows employees to interact with each other and share information. Oxfam also uses a range of other online tools such as Skype, Webex, Blackboard and Collaborate. As Oxfam consists of a number of national “silos” and joint working can be difficult, the use of social media is seen by employees as providing the opportunity to allow them to “*work across the organisation much more*”.

A number of communities have been set up using Karl, for example an IT group called “Geek Speak” of around 120 employees across the world has been used to bring IT workers together. Social media generally is seen as being able to enable staff to share information, communicate and work together as well as to become less top-down and become more inclusive. This is important given Oxfam’s dispersed and diverse workforce. Social media is also seen as a vehicle for improving employee engagement.

Despite these positive views, social media has yet to have a significant impact on the organisation. One explanation is that adoption might be restricted because Yammer was introduced informally with little central direction or support from HR or senior leaders or a communication strategy. Another, perhaps more important reason is the diversity of channels used within the organisation. With affiliate organisations working relatively independently, they have been allowed to develop their own IT and internal communications systems organically using different platforms and networks. The use of a single global enterprise social network would allow them to improve internal communications. Because of these issues, Oxfam IT Directors have launched a “Find, Connect, Collaborate, Consolidate” initiative in order to rationalise the approaches across the global organisation so that the affiliates can be linked together more effectively.

Collaboration to improve decision-making

Second, the case studies provided evidence of the use of social media to encourage collaboration between members of the workforce and the engagement of employees in organisational issues in order to improve decision-making. This use of social media can be illustrated through the case studies in Lloyds Register, London Borough of Lewisham and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

Lloyds Register

Lloyds Register is a global engineering, technical and business services organisation which employs over 9,000 people in 78 countries. In 2015, the energy team, including 2,500 employees globally, embarked on a business transformation programme to change from a regional matrix structure to a global service line

structure. The company wanted to both make the change quickly and to involve employees in the new organisation design so that it reflected local needs and fostered collaboration and employee engagement. Despite existing voice channels, they decided to adopt the social research tool “Future of Work Lab” (FOWlab) in order to engage a large and geographically dispersed workforce in a focused discussion.

FOWlab allows large groups of employees to collaborate in developing business solutions to identified business issues, to have their say and shape the change process and to identify concerns, challenges and solutions. The tool is accessible online and users have named accounts because the company saw it as a means to ensure professional and constructive contributions. Lloyds Register posted a number of questions or provocations so that managers could frame the debate but also allowed employees to raise their own issues and questions. Each “jam” was online for 72 hours constantly in order to promote intensive involvement and discussion on a particular issue and to allow a narrow focus. The company undertook extensive marketing work via emails, messaging from senior management, a video from line managers in order to facilitate take up. The role of senior managers in both promoting the tool and in taking part themselves was seen as essential.

Out of 3,066 employees who were invited to take part, over 1,275 did so, posting 1,400 comments. Staff were seen to be co-creating ideas and projects together and as supporting innovation. The company also perceived an impact on employee engagement and perceptions of voice as employees felt “*genuinely consulted*” and

that they had a greater buy-in to decisions as “*when the solution comes out of the Jam, they’re not surprised as that [the] solution they’ve identified*”. Interviewees in Lloyds Register emphasized the importance of acting on the information coming out of the Jam as “*if you’re expecting people to give up their time, you need to do something with it*”.

London Borough of Lewisham

London Borough of Lewisham is a local authority based in South East London, delivering services to almost 300,000 people with 2,500 employees. The organization has undergone significant change due to cuts in Government funding and needed to review services in order to deliver further financial savings. Lewisham saw involving employees in the change process as essential to promoting understanding. In addition to existing voice mechanisms, such as regular team meetings, wider meetings led by the chief executive, formal consultations and a staff survey, the organisation introduced the “We.Create” social media tool in order to “*crowdsource ideas from staff*” on re-designing services and reducing costs while maintaining service quality and outcomes. Employees can suggest ideas, and vote and comment on other people’s ideas so that suggestions are shaped collaboratively and managers can see which ideas resonate with employees. Employees who suggested ideas that were later taken up were invited to get involved in their delivery.

With the year up to July 2014, 533 staff members had used the system with over 100 ideas being suggested. As well as existing Voice channels, having a culture that “*encourages consultation and engagement*” was seen as important in this success.

The ability of teams to work across services was seen as a driver of innovation, and the tool generally as promoting a sense of voice, involvement and employee engagement.

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is one of the largest NHS (National Health Service) Trusts in the UK, employing around 16,000 staff at seven different sites and treating approximately 1.5m patients annually. Leeds' set up a crowdsourcing platform ("Wayfinder") as a means to create effective voice mechanisms to empower staff and allow them to collaborate and "co-create". Wayfinder allows people to anonymously share ideas and comments on ongoing organisational campaigns, as well as to read and rate other people's comments. For example, Wayfinder was used as a key channel to involve staff in a campaign to assess the organisation's diversity and inclusion policies.

Interviewees at Leeds' emphasized the importance of the role of senior managers in promoting the social media tool and in "becoming" advocates" of the system.

Interviewees felt that the clear support of senior managers meant that employees feel more comfortable using the technology. Also important was that Wayfinder is anonymised, allowing employees to speak freely and openly without fear of retribution. This is particularly important given historical concerns by employees of speaking up in the NHS. There were some concerns that this might lead to inappropriate usage such as excessive criticism or abuse, but this had not been the case at the time of the research.

Senior managers believed that Wayfinder had helped to develop networks and to deliver service improvements e.g. Theatre Directors used the tool to examine different ideas to run their theatres more efficiently. In addition, interviewees believed that the initiative had been successful in both generating ideas and identifying concerns among the workforce.

Discussion

Our two questions were (1) why have organizations been less enthusiastic about using social media to help employees to collaborate, share their knowledge and give voice to their views about issues over which they are most concerned in their organizations? and (2) what options are best for organizations seeking to benefit from employee collaboration, knowledge sharing and voice? We drew on a range of literature on technological engagement and organizational control and power to answer these questions. Thus we developed a framework of four scenarios of employees use of enterprise social media to express authentic voice, with four propositions concerning the use of enterprise social media to improve two-way communications and collaborative decision making and data from six case studies to provide a test of the propositions.

The problems of organizational control. Our literature review highlighted the importance of power and the need for control facing managers in most organizations. Organization and management are defined by the need for control, which is often based on the exercise by managers of power-over employees. The cases highlighted three findings relevant to the problems of control, the exercise of power-

over and mistrust of managers by employees. Employee mistrust of technological innovation is quite widespread because such innovations are sometimes seen by employees as managers acting incompetently (without the necessary skills and ability), lacking benevolence (i.e. not seeking to do good for employees) or integrity (not adhering to principles that employees find acceptable), three important determinants of trustworthiness in organizations (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995). Firstly, the introduction of Yammer in Oxfam was perceived to be restricted because of a lack of senior management competence in providing direction and communications support.

Secondly, a lack of perceived organizational benevolence was evident in the relatively slow adoption of Yammer into Nampak, which was attributed to a lack of employee trust in the technology because it was seen by some as a 'corporate tool' rather than seeking to benefit employees. This perception of social media as a corporate tool and the reluctance to see social media being introduced to do good for employees was also reflected in the relatively slow uptake of Workmate in Southeastern. Similarly, Lloyds Register's perceived needs to have its senior managers 'frame the debate' by structuring the agenda for discussion falls into the category of lacking benevolence. This relates to the importance of employees' belief that their voice will be acted on (Burris, Rockman & Kimmons, 2017) and supports our earlier work that emphasized the importance of personal control and perceived impact in the success of online voice tools. (Martin et al, 2015). Some of the organisations in this study had attempted to address this need. For example, Lloyds Register allowed employees to suggest topics for discussion as well as to contribute to discussions on those topics suggested by senior management. London Borough

of Lewisham encouraged those employees who had suggested the ideas that were taken up to become involved in their delivery and implementation.

Thirdly, managers being viewed as lacking integrity was evidenced in perceptions of a lack of support from senior and middle managers in the case of Southeastern, some of whom were perceived by employees as viewing social media as a calculative method of enhancing their own power rather than introducing social media for the good of all. Arguably, Lloyds Register's requirement that employees who posted material on FOWlab record their names to ensure 'professional and constructive' contributions could be seen as a low trust initiative and violation of employees' preferences for anonymity. Interestingly, the opposite stance was taken in the case of Leeds NHS Trust by ensuring that employee posts on its crowdsourcing platform, Wayfinder, were anonymous. Arguably, this was an example of a high trust initiative met by a high trust response, since despite some early misgivings, there was little evidence of excessive criticism or abuse.

Technological engagement. Our literature review suggested employees would use social media to the extent that it allowed them to express an identity, was consistent with their values and allowed them to express a degree of psychological ownership. Such a perspective is consistent with the notion of *power-to-do*, in which managers and employees can work together to create a positive sum game where both parties benefit. Our cases provided a number of examples where power-to-do appeared to be the principle or aim underlying the introduction of social media. Thus, in cases where social media were perceived by employees and managers as facilitating two-way communication and information sharing, these seemed to be characterised by

positive outcomes and take-up. So, for example, Lloyds Register recorded more than 40% of its staff who were invited to take part in FOWlab did so actively by posting comments, with employees feeling 'genuinely consulted' and expressing greater buy-in to decisions that came from the Jam in which they had participated (Burris et al, 2017). Similarly, the introduction of Wayfinder at Leeds NHS Trust as a means of ensuring collaboration and co-creation of ideas to benefit patient care appeared to have resulted in positive outcomes in generating ideas and raising workforce concerns. In this case, employees' engagement with social media seems to have benefitted from senior managers promotion and advocacy of the system, and high trust initiative in allowing for anonymity of responses.

Psychological ownership was also important in cases of successful implementation through the inclusion of non-work discussion to promote community and a sense that the media belonged to employees. A good example of organizational learning in this respect was the response by senior managers to the negative comments about the corporate feel of Yammer in Nampak, whereby they began to promote informal posting to generate 'community spirit'. Similarly, Southeastern's decision to provide a trade union page and allow self-regulation of posting appear to be underpinned by a desire to promote psychological ownership among employees.

Conclusions

Overall the case studies support the importance of organisational control and technological engagement in encouraging the use of social media as a means for promoting communication, collaboration and employee voice, and support our framework of four scenarios and associated propositions. This framework and nteh

data from the cases provide important insights in relation to our two research questions. First we can see that concerns related to organizational control and differing levels of technological engagement might provide an answer to our question of why some organizations have been less enthusiastic about using social media for collaboration, communication and employee voice. Promoting employee voice via social media technologies is not as simple as just introducing these tools and expecting employees to adopt them freely. Organizations might need to be prepared to relinquish a degree of control to their employees in order to encourage them to believe that engaging with the technology is worthwhile and will have a valued impact on the organization.

Second, we can provide some recommendations as to how organisations might best benefit from employee collaboration, knowledge sharing and voice. It is clear from both this study, our previous work (Martin et al 2015) and the work of others on what employees seek to voice and why they do so ((Burris et al, 2017) that the success of employee voice mechanisms, including those reliant on social media, is dependent on the willingness of senior management to value their input and engage in genuine dialogue with employees in an open and participative organizational culture. Without these prerequisites, employee voice mechanisms will not be successful regardless of how advanced they are technologically. The imposition of significant restrictions (outside of the “light touch” guidelines used by our case study organisations) on the exercise of voice via enterprise social networks will result in employees perceiving a lack of both personal control and impact, which will in turn discourage them from engaging with social media. As suggested above, building such a culture requires senior management to share control and trust employees to exercise voice

constructively. Such a culture may require, as Ricouer (1992) suggested, exercising 'power in common', which suggests a system whereby managers and employees come together to articulate an organization's aims as being equally concerned with ethics and morality as economic outcomes, and with ensuring well-being at work for all.

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